



## State of Connecticut

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INTERNSHIP COMMITTEE

### **Environment Committee Public Hearing March 8, 2010**

#### **Testimony On H.B. 5319, An Act Concerning Recycling, Certain Solid Waste Management Reforms and Requirements for Solid Waste and Residue Facilities**

Chairs Meyer, Roy, Ranking Members McKinney and Chapin and members of the Environment committee, thank you for raising House Bill 5319 *An Act Concerning Recycling, Certain Solid Waste Management Reforms and Requirements for Solid Waste and Ash Residue Facilities*. I am here to testify in support of this important legislation that would begin to address our state's fast approaching solid waste management capacity dilemma through increased recycling and other waste diversion mechanisms.

Some of the proposals included in the bill include: expanding the list of mandatory recycled products and requiring DEP to review the recycling regulations every ten years; requiring each municipality that offers curbside trash pick-up to also provide curbside recycling pick-up; requiring recycling bins on properties that are deemed "common gathering venues"; having DEP study the costs and benefits of different methods to remove food waste from the disposal system; expanded reporting requirements for haulers of waste; and eliminating the Certificate of Need requirement for and ash landfills; and has CASE study the potential beneficial use of ash residue.

Our state has always prided itself on its leadership on environment issues, including recycling. We were one of the first states to adopt the "bottle bill", and we recently expanded this law to include water bottles, which have grown in popularity dramatically over the last decade. Unfortunately in this day and age, these measures do not go far enough to address our environmental problems. The state's most recent amendment to the Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP) showed that we missed our goal of recycling 40% of our waste by 2000. We were only able to get our recycling efforts up to 30% by 2005.

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Connecticut is already coping with a lack of capacity to handle the waste we create as we are shipping 327,000 tons or 9% of our waste to other states. The SWMP indicates that if we do not increase our recycling rate from 30% by 2024, we will be forced to export 1.5 million tons of trash to other states for disposal that year. *This is unacceptable.* The SWMP sets a target recycling rate of 58% by 2024. While we realize this goal will be very difficult to achieve, we should be committed to getting as close to that target as possible.

HB 5319 does not contain anything that this committee hasn't heard in the past. The bill merely combines the best aspects from previous years' bills and ideas from on-going debates as to how we can achieve a higher recycling rate and ensure we are capable of handling our waste for the next several decades.

We believe that implementing these measures would be an important next step in addressing our solid waste management policies. Not only do we need to expand our recycling efforts, but we need to be sure that we are doing everything possible to reduce the total amount of waste we generate so we are not exporting our trash to other states. Our Municipal Solid Waste Hierarchy indicates that land filling waste should be our last resort. And, simply disposing of that waste out-of-state does not meet that commitment and is unfair to our neighboring states' environments.

Again, I thank the committee for holding this public hearing and urge your committee to favorably report HB 5319.